Animals in the Studio House

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Introduction

This *Conversation Piece* highlights the range of new research discoveries that are being -- and are still to be -- made about artists' studio homes. This conversation was first aired in a workshop at the Paul Mellon Centre in October 2017 when a group of invited curators, scholars, and students shared their research about the Alma-Tadema studio-houses, exploring how they were designed, used and re-used, unearthing many tantalising links to other studio-houses created or inhabited by artists of the previous, contemporary, and next generations. This *Conversation Piece* aims to recapture the sense of discovery that made that workshop so exciting, and also to make the speakers' contributions available to wider audiences. It is coordinated by Elizabeth Prettejohn and Peter Trippi, who have published an extended introduction to the topic in this issue.

Response by

Charlotte Gere, Independent Historian

An Artistic Interior by Jan Frans Verhas

Living in Melbury Road, Holland Park, in 1958 was an education in aesthetic studio-houses at a time when they were quite unknown and unappreciated. The leases were coming to an end and the houses, many of them in a poor state, were threatened with demolition. They were lived in by old ladies and bedsitting tenants, often only three or so owners after the original inhabitants had departed. Getting an order to view the property when it was for sale was the way inside William Burges' Tower House, and very grim it was, almost completely vandalized with the gilding dimmed and carvings littering the floors. Leighton House was all strip lighting and plasterboard, so there was no reason to visit. The ruinous Casa Tadema in St John's Wood, carved up into flats, was still just about recognisable.

In view of the wealth of surviving artists' houses, choosing to discuss Lawrence Alma-Tadema's former home in Regent's Park, Townshend House, of which no trace remains, is little short of perverse. But, over time, an impressive quantity of evidence for its interiors has emerged. The painting by Jan Frans Verhas illustrated here was advertised for sale by the dealer Christopher Wood in 1990 as "An Artistic Interior", signed and dated 1870 (Fig. 1). It compares closely with the illustration of the curtained opening to the two drawing rooms on the first floor of Townshend House in Daniel Moncure Conway's book *Travels in South Kensington*, published in 1882 (Fig. 2). Because both the painting and illustration repeat exactly the relative positions of the two layers of striped door hangings, a connection with some phase of Townshend House seemed indisputable.

Figure 1.
Jan Frans Verhas, An Artistic Interior, 1870, oil on panel, 59 x 85.7 cm. Private Collection, New York. Digital image courtesy of Kevin Noble Photography.

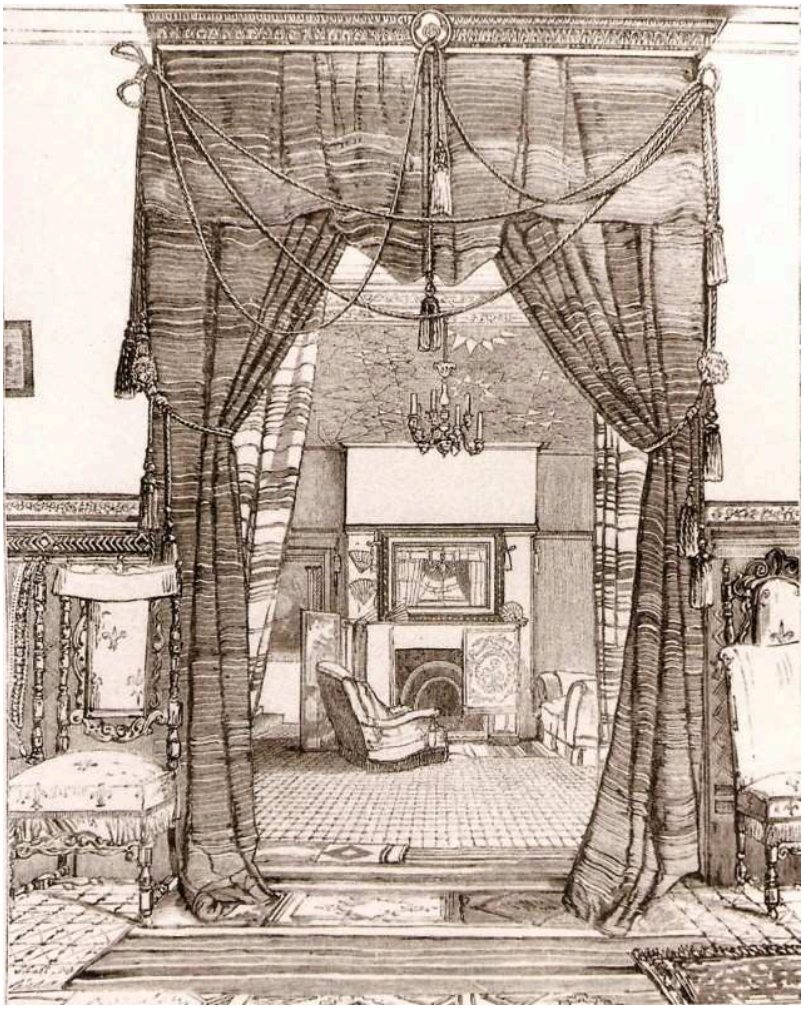

Figure 2.
Townshend House Interior, illustration in Daniel Moncure Conway, *Travels in South Kensington* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1882).

Figure 3.
Lawrence Alma-Tadema, Woman and Flowers, 1868, oil on panel, 49.8 x 37.2 cm. Collection of Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (41.117). Digital image courtesy of Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

The painting is dated 1870, but Alma-Tadema moved into Townshend House only upon his marriage to Laura Epps in the summer of 1871. So, although unarguably an Alma-Tadema interior, Verhas' image poses more questions than it answers—and the workshop audience had many suggestions. There are differences, most strikingly the fitted patterned carpet in the painting and the dado, now topped by a miniature cast of the Parthenon frieze (a detail, much remarked, of the Townshend House décor) in Conway's illustration. Although hardly legible here, the Parthenon cast is described in Conway's text.

The room in the painting must be at ground level because it leads to a conservatory. In 1870, the painting's date, Alma-Tadema was living in Frederick Goodall's house at 31 Camden Square with his two small daughters

and his sister, Artje, who had accompanied him to London. Artje is portrayed in Alma-Tadema's 1868 painting, *Flowers* (Fig. 3), which Verhas shows in reproduction to the left of the curtained opening, and she may also be the seated figure in his painting. The striped curtains (possibly North African) are known to have been among the chattels shipped from Brussels to London in the autumn of 1870.

Although his book was not published until 1882, Conway's drawing appears to date from before the remodelling of Townshend House (1875–1876) after the Regent's Canal explosion of October 1874. A painting by Nellie Epps, dated 1873 and illustrated on page 81 of the exhibition catalogue, shows that the Japanese tatami matting "dado" in the Verhas painting was by then in the ground floor "Dutch Room"; the woven basket chair had migrated to Alma-Tadema's studio (illustrated on page 121). During the remodelling, the double drawing room opening was altered and the striped curtains were not re-hung in that position.

If Verhas' interior is, uniquely, the Camden Square house, it shows the remarkable lengths Alma-Tadema was prepared to go to adorn a house he rented only briefly. When Christopher Wood advertised it in 1990, the painting had no recorded history; he sold it to a private collector, who has recently allowed it to be photographed. In time, some puzzling aspects may be resolved, but for the moment, it is almost certainly a sublime addition to the small number of images we have of Alma-Tadema's sister Artje.

Response by

Stephanie Moser, Professor and Head of Department of Archaeology, University of Southampton

An Aura of Antiquity: Archaeology and the Ancient World in Alma-Tadema's Studio-Homes

During his lengthy and highly productive career, Lawrence Alma-Tadema established distinctive strategies to communicate the rich beauty of antiquity. Chief among them was the detailed representation of archaeological elements, which promptly became the hallmark of his paintings. While it is reasonable to assume that the accurate portrayal of ancient material culture bolstered the veracity of Alma-Tadema's interpretations of the past, his use of archaeology serviced other important aesthetic agendas. With their highly decorative qualities and finely crafted appearance, domestic antiquities became a unique lens through which Alma-Tadema expressed and conceptualised beauty.

Integral to his approach and working methods was the central place accorded to archaeology in his studios and homes. In my recent study of Alma-Tadema's engagement with archaeology, four key elements were examined: his portfolios of photographs and drawings; his library; the studio props he amassed; and the interior decoration of his homes. Intimately related and dependent on each other, these aspects of his working practice testify to an intense and sustained engagement with archaeology.

From early in his career, Alma-Tadema adopted a comprehensive and systematic approach to collecting, studying, and ordering materials upon which he based his paintings of life in antiquity. In addition to his extensive collection of photographs of archaeological sites, monuments, and artefacts, he made numerous sketches of archaeological objects and copied many illustrations from key archaeological texts. Although compositional and figure studies by Alma-Tadema exist, these are far outnumbered by his drawings of archaeological materials, including architectural features, household wares, dress, hairstyles, and other "accessories". His unique archive of 164 portfolios now at the University of Birmingham's Cadbury Research Library, organised according to ancient cultures and subjects, closely informed the construction of his paintings, revealing the extent to which he immersed himself in the material world of antiquity.

Also fundamental to Alma-Tadema's preparatory work was his extensive archaeological library. Containing more than 4,000 books, excavation reports, and periodicals relating to the study of ancient civilisations, this library was widely recognised to be of great importance and had its own dedicated

rooms in Townshend House and then at Grove End Road. As with the portfolios, Alma-Tadema started to acquire archaeological books early in his career and the immense collection that he accrued testified to his serious interest in familiarising himself with major findings.

The studio props, antiquities, and collectibles in the possession of Alma-Tadema were another critical part of the suite of materials he drew upon when creating paintings. While he is well known for decorating his homes with an abundance of “beautiful things”, the extent to which Alma-Tadema paid homage to the material culture of the ancient world in his own environment also served to inform his art. Of particular note are the reproductions of antiquities he commissioned; his Egyptian stool—copied from an example in the British Museum—always remained a favourite in his studios. Indeed, it appears in the centre foreground of the highly characteristic illustration reproduced here (Fig. 4).

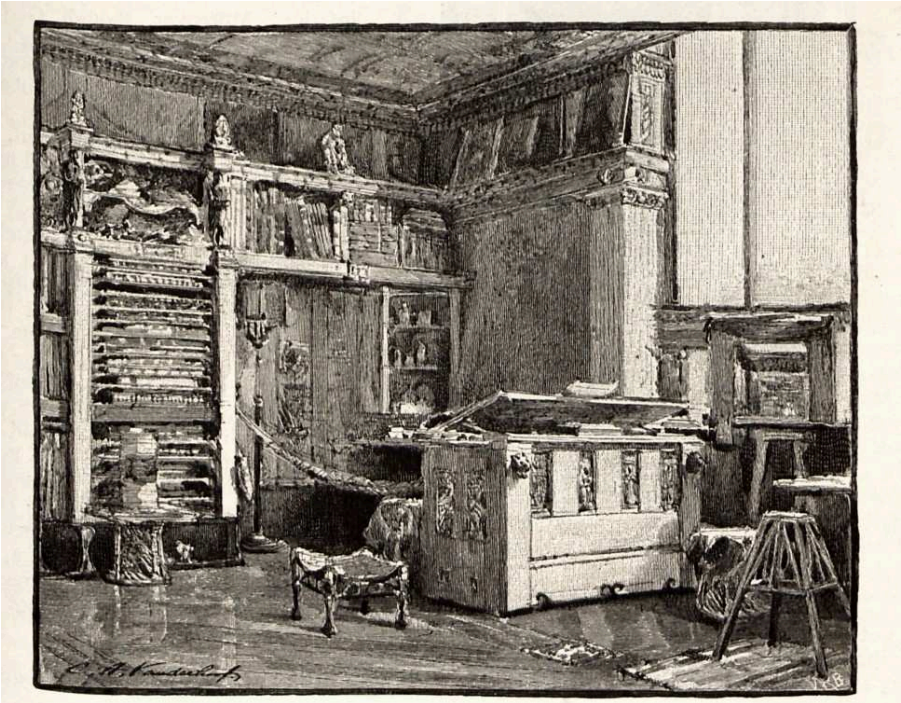

Figure 4.
Cosmo Monkhouse, Illustration of Lawrence Alma-Tadema’s Studio, in “Some English Artists and Their Studios” by Cosmo Monkhouse, *The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine* 24 (1882): 567.

Response by

Caroline Dakers, Professor of Cultural History at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, University of Arts the Arts, London

Alma-Tadema's Dutchness

Lawrence Alma-Tadema was Dutch, but as soon as he married Laura Theresa Epps in 1871, he applied to Queen Victoria for the right to live in Britain for the rest of his life. He did this so that he could become a Royal Academician; he knew there was a rule that: "no foreigners are admitted members of the Academy". Three years after he became a British denizen, Alma-Tadema was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy.

Meanwhile, under her husband's tutelage, Laura adopted his Dutch artistic roots: she painted Dutch interiors and her studios in Townshend House and later Grove End Road were furnished with Dutch pieces, some of which had belonged to Alma-Tadema's mother. Alice Meynell noted: "in details of domestic life, Dutch habits, Dutch furniture, and Dutch dress … Mrs Alma-Tadema … has surrounded herself." [1] He, on the other hand, advanced rapidly within the British art establishment painting reconstructions of ancient Rome and Egypt. He became a full Royal Academician in 1879 and, on 24 May 1899, he was knighted in the Queen's birthday honours. He was the first artist from the continent to have been knighted for over a century.

A banquet at London's Hotel Metropole was organised in Alma-Tadema's honour, but by the time it took place, on 4 November, Britain was at war with the Dutch Boers in South Africa. The situation was not easy for Alma-Tadema. He had never lost his Dutch accent, and indeed, it was the subject of jokes. Comyns Carr commented, rather patronisingly, "he never acquired complete mastery over our language". [2] While the Dutch government remained neutral during the fighting, many Dutch people sympathised with the Boers. The sculptor Edward Onslow Ford served as master of ceremonies at the dinner and proclaimed that: "nationality in the world of art counts for very little". [3] The painter Henry Woods, however, commented unkindly, in private, "I wonder how many relatives Sir Tadema has in the Transvaal? I cannot make it out why he was knighted." [4]

By January 1900, the British were struggling against the Boers and their Maxim machine guns. J.W. Waterhouse encouraged his colleagues to donate their paintings to the Artists' War Fund Exhibition at the Guildhall Art Gallery, which would raise money for widows and the wounded. Everyone obliged, including Alma-Tadema, Poynter, Herkomer, Sargent, and even the Queen, who provided two etchings. The show was opened by her daughter, Princess

Louise. The paintings on view were auctioned by Christie's. Alma-Tadema's *A Flag of Truce*, reflecting his passionate desire for an end to the conflict, reached the highest price at £441 (Fig. 5). In it, he shows a woman, looking rather like his elder daughter, Laurence, raising a vase of white lilies beneath his studio's silvered apse.

Figure 5.
Lawrence Alma-Tadema, A Flag of Truce, 1900, oil on panel, 44.5 x 22.2 cm. Private Collection. Digital image courtesy of Private Collection.

After the relief of Mafeking on 17 May 1900, news filtered in of the terrible treatment of Boer wives and children in British concentration camps; thousands were dying of disease and malnutrition. There were no street parties when peace was finally made in 1902. Another painting of flags was completed soon after in Alma-Tadema's house, this time by his daughter Anna (Fig. 6). This contribution to the family's hall of panels is small in scale, but it nonetheless drew the attention of *The Strand Magazine:*

> there is in [the painting] a conceit as beautiful as it is refined … the lowermost flag is that of Holland, which no-one needs reminding is the country of Sir Lawrence's birth. Adorning the flag is a laurel wreath surrounding the initials LAT, and the whole world has united with the country of his birth in offering him that recognised mark of greatest distinction. [5]

Alma-Tadema and his daughters had all become British, yet Anna chose, here, to emphasise her father's Dutch origins, even in the aftermath of the Boer War. There is no British flag depicted in the painting.

Figure 6. Anna Alma-Tadema, Flags, ca. 1902, oil on panel, 86.7 x 12.4 cm. Private Collection, England. Digital image courtesy of Private Collection.

Response by

Donato Esposito, Independent Art Historian

The Place of Drawing in Alma-Tadema's Studio Practice

Little is known of Lawrence Alma-Tadema's studio practice. Beyond his large working archive at the University of Birmingham, comparatively few drawings of any kind survive. The recent appearance of a cache of six related chalk drawings from his youth has provided new insights into Alma-Tadema's working practice, particularly in the period before his permanent move to London in 1870. In 1905, his biographer Percy Cross Standing (1870–1931) remarked on the pronounced early success of Alma-Tadema's ancient Egyptian subjects: "So careful at all times about detail, he took extraordinary care in the preparation of his preliminary sketches for these [Egyptian] pictures." [6]

The group of rediscovered drawings matches Standing's description of the care Alma-Tadema undertook in the preparation of these (and by extension other) early compositions. They descended through his brother-in-law Edmund Gosse (1849–1928), were later sold, and eventually came onto the art market in 2017. [7] They date from 1857–1858, when the artist lived in Antwerp; having brought them to London, he kept them until his death in 1912.

One of the finest works in the group is a drapery study executed in graphite on brown paper and reworked with red and white chalk; it is inscribed by the artist's daughter Anna Alma-Tadema "for the Contrary Oracle" (Fig. 7). No such subject is listed in Vern G. Swanson's *catalogue raisonné* of Alma-Tadema's paintings (1990), and it is unclear if such a work was ever begun, or if it might have been destroyed by the artist. The drawing depicts the lower half of a male figure wearing a striped tasselled garment, fastened at the waist with a large knot; an auxiliary study of a knotted piece of fabric is indicated to the left of the larger one. The verso of the sheet depicts three studies of a male figure holding a distaff. The remaining drawings in the group are drapery studies executed in the same medium.

Figure 7.
Lawrence Alma-Tadema, Study of a male figure wearing a striped tasseled garment and two pieces of fabric (recto), ca. 1857–1858, graphite with red and white chalk on brown paper, 31 x 19.3 cm. Private Collection.

Despite their interest as early demonstrations of his fine draughtsmanship, this intriguing group of drawings raises the thorny question of process in Alma-Tadema's studio. His impressive *oeuvre* of more than 400 paintings seems to have been developed without much recourse to preparatory drawings. This set him apart from such contemporaries as Edward John Poynter (1836–1918), who drew feverishly throughout his long career, even after he scaled down his output in the wake of administrative appointments to the Royal Academy and National Gallery in the 1890s.

Alma-Tadema's sister-in-law Ellen Gosse (1850–1929) had privileged access to his studio and observed him at work; she noted his Continental practice of producing an *ébauche* on the blank canvas (or panel), painted in a "thin oil-colour of some neutral colour", which was subsequently covered over as the

painting developed. [8] Occasionally an unfinished or abandoned work reveals this confident, fluid modelling in a “neutral colour”, which was typically brown or olive green. However, the question remains: did Alma-Tadema abandon his early practice of producing multiple drawn (or painted) studies? Many might have been made, but few survive.

Response by

Carolyn Dixon, Independent Art Historian

The Epps Family Screen

When my father, Dr Toby Epps, occasionally mentioned his “French Granny”, I wish I had paid more attention. I cannot remember a single story about her, which is a pity because there she is in the centre of the Epps Family Screen, painted by Laura and Lawrence Alma-Tadema (Fig. 8). Anne Marie Camille Epps (née Linton) was the daughter of the engraver Henry Duff Linton. She became the wife of Laura Alma-Tadema’s oldest brother, Hahnemann, who appears beside her on the screen. I remember my aunt, Camille Epps, telling me how she hated holding his hand when she was about four and he was an old man. She thought his hand was like a dry bird’s claw.

Figure 8.
Laura Theresa Epps (later Alma-Tadema) and Lawrence Alma-Tadema, The Epps Family Screen, 1870–1871 (unfinished), oil on canvas on wood frame, six hinged panels, each 182.9 x 78.7 cm. Collection of Victoria and Albert Museum, London (W.20-1981). Digital image courtesy of Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

The screen is interesting in many ways. First, it is a beautiful, useful object decorated with painting and writing. Across the top in Gothic script on a gold background runs an inscription promoting family unity. Then there is the subject of the painting, the Epps family all grouped around the dining room table. The family included five daughters and three sons; two of the sons were doctors, but the oldest, my ancestor Hahnemann, worked in the cocoa

business. My father remembered as a small boy visiting the cocoa factory on the site of London's Shot Tower; in 1951, the Festival of Britain was held there. He remembered being sick on his way home because everyone had given him chocolate to eat!

From left to right on the screen are shown first the patriarch Dr George Napoleon Epps with his wife Anne Charlotte (née Bacon). Then there is a panel with two blank spaces, which I believe may have been for two of the four children of Hahnemann and his wife. Next comes a shadowy figure in black in the background; in front of the table, we see the beautifully painted back of a lady in a golden silk dress. It would be natural to suppose that Emily Epps Williams, by this time already a widow, is the one in black and Ellen (Nellie) Epps is in gold, but here the word "Emily" appears under the figure in gold.

Then comes Charles Pratt and his wife Amy (née Epps), then Louisa Hill (née Epps) holding her baby Charlotte (Lotty) with her husband Roland Hill. Next is Frances Epps (née Hall) and her husband Dr Washington Epps, then Laura in a green dress. In the background is Lawrence Alma-Tadema; the couple on the extreme right are Dr and Mrs Franklin Epps.

The screen is an early and rare example of Laura and Lawrence's collaboration. It was commenced in 1870 when her father, Dr George Napoleon Epps, refused Alma-Tadema permission to marry Laura, his seventeen-year-old daughter, who was sixteen years younger than the Dutch artist. But it was acceptable for Alma-Tadema to teach the young Laura how to paint. This enabled the couple to get to know each other better while Laura became an accomplished artist.

The Epps Family Screen remained unfinished by the time they married in 1871.

Response by

Shelley Hales, Senior Lecturer in Art & Visual Culture, University of Bristol

Reminiscences of the Roman House

The impluvium and shrine of the atrium at Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema's home at Grove End Road are perhaps typical of the frequent references to antiquity in the late nineteenth-century studio-houses of London (Fig. 9). These came at the end of a century of intense interest in the role of Pompeian domestic art and architecture as a template for design in modern life. This progressed from the interiors of the earlier century to full-scale model reconstructions (such as the Pompeii Court of the Crystal Palace at Sydenham) and painted imaginations of a lived antiquity, all of which developed alongside, and themselves helped shape, the continued excavation, publication, and reconstruction of the ancient sites.

Figure 9.
Nicolaas van der Waay, The Little Courtyard at 17, Grove End Road, ca. 1890–91, brush and grey ink, grey wash, heightened with white on paper, 38 x 25.5 cm. Collection of Museum of Friesland, Leeuwarden (PTII-1486). Digital image courtesy of Museum of Friesland, Leeuwarden / Collection Het Koninklijk Fries Genootschap / Conserved with support of the Wassenbergh- Clarijs-Fontein Foundation.

The appeal of exploring these influences is not to “source spot” ancient inspirations for their own sake, but to decipher how such traces were the products of a circuitous and mediated route back to antiquity. Studio-houses such as those of Leighton or Alma-Tadema helped to create a decidedly nineteenth-century antiquity that achieved acceptance through accordance with contemporary taste and claimed authenticity through visitors’ familiarity with its modern sources, which were sometimes simultaneously inspiration for, and products of, the studios. They created spaces which both validated

and were validated by those outputs. The rose petals scattered around the impluvium here, for example, evoke those that smother the emperor's guests in *The Roses of Heliogabalus*, as painted in this very house in 1888.

A particular affordance of the studio-house space is the way it takes its place among all these referents as the spot at which it becomes possible to live in rather than simply gaze at the ancient past. Further exploration shows that the authenticity of most studio-houses' engagement with the ancient domestic interior lay not in the fullness or fidelity of reconstruction, but in the way that eclectic references to different spaces and times created an ambiance around their inhabitants, whose private lives and public personae—living present and painted past—melded into one. The result is an ambiguous, heterotopic space that created an environment in which the theatrical is never simply reduced to theatre, allowing the successful performance of an inhabited antiquity and an embodied and sensorily rich lived encounter. The scent and organic nature of the petals evoke in the most immediate terms not only the process of composing the famous painting but likewise the actual Roman banquet itself. From this point of view, we might reconsider our tendency to model such spaces in purely material ways as reconstructions of a pre-existing past in order to consider them, as contemporary observers put it, as "reminiscences": memories triggered (in fact created) in the present.

Enriching our understanding of these reminiscences becomes more pressing not only because they have inevitably shaped how our generation "remembers" antiquity, but more importantly because the same gestures of remembering through reconstructing were being practised on the "real" ruins of the Roman world at this time, literally re-membering that past.

Response by

Marlies Stoter, Curator at the Fries Museum, Leeuwarden

Antiques and Antiquities in the Studio-House: Looking for Answers

In 1913, the furnishings of Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema's studio-house in Grove End Road were auctioned off *in situ*. The painter's last will declared that his daughters Laurence and Anna were entitled to remove their personal belongings beforehand. An artist herself, Anna also inherited the contents of her stepmother Laura's studio. But the remainder of the lavishly furnished house had to be sold, with the proceeds going into a trust fund intended to support these two unmarried daughters for the rest of their lives.

The auction catalogue lists the Alma-Tademas' now widely dispersed belongings, which demonstrate how thoroughly Lawrence's personal life was interwoven with the creation of his studio-houses and his working methods as a painter-archaeologist. In the catalogue, for example, we find a list of Alma-Tadema's silver objects. Some were replicas of the Hildesheim Treasure of Roman silver discovered in 1868; these have been in the collection of the Fries Museum (Leeuwarden) since 1935, when Laurence donated them. One of Alma-Tadema's favourite Hildesheim items was the Hercules Bowl, which depicts the infant hero strangling serpents (Fig. 10). The artist always kept this bowl close by in his studio and depicted it many times in his paintings. (It hangs by the window in his sister-in-law's depiction of Alma-Tadema's studio in 1883, illustrated here, Fig. 11). Engraved at the bottom of the shallow bowl is TRÉSOR D'HILDESHEIM FAC-SIMILE GALVANIQUE CHRISTOFLE & CIE. Also custom-engraved there is *L Alma Tadema*. When you hold a real object like this in your hand, you start seeking answers to questions like: Why the Hildesheim Treasure? Why Christofle? Where did Alma-Tadema buy these replicas? Perhaps in Paris?

View this illustration online

Figure 10.
Christofle, Silver-plated electrotype replica of the Hercules Bowl (recto and verso), 21.6 cm (diameter) x 5.6 cm (depth). Collection of Museum of Friesland, Leeuwarden (QM08702). Digital image courtesy of Museum of Friesland, Leeuwarden.

My curiosity to learn more about Alma-Tadema's inclusion of Hildesheim replicas in his paintings from 1872 onward led to the discovery that hundreds of cast-iron versions were sold to the interested public, mostly Germans, in the years before the Parisian firm Christofle could make new and better versions through silver-plated electrotyping. While preparing an essay for the catalogue accompanying the exhibition *Lawrence Alma-Tadema: At Home in Antiquity*, the British scholar Alistair Grant learned that the French could supply these replicas to the South Kensington Museum just as easily as their English competitors Elkington could. Thus, Alma-Tadema, as a regular visitor to that museum, bought his expensive replicated antiquities close to home and used them again and again.

This is just one example, and there are many more on the horizon. As we locate more of the objects enumerated in the 1913 auction catalogue, it would be ideal to bring them together in a virtual world—a database to which we all could add information, and around which we could discuss issues and raise questions of mutual interest.

Figure 11.
Emily Epps Williams , The Studio, Townshend House, 1883, oil on panel, 81.28 x 16.51 cm. Collection of J.J. Fitzpatrick. Digital image courtesy of J.J. Fitzpatrick.

The Alma-Tadema project has also inspired me to consider the furnishings of the studio-house of the painter Christoffel Bisschop (1828–1904). Bisschop was an important member of The Hague School specialising in genre and historical scenes. In 1882, he and his English wife Kate Seaton Foreman Swift bought a new villa in the dunes between The Hague and Scheveningen, an area where other Hague School painters settled as well. Like their neighbours (and Alma-Tadema's cousin) Hendrik Willem Mesdag and his artist-wife Sientje, [9] the couple divided their time between collecting antiques and making art. The Bisschops' home became a point of interest to many visitors, including Queen Sophie of Württemberg. In their paintings, both of the Bisschops often depicted beautiful objects of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that they had collected themselves.

After Christoffel Bisschop's death, the villa's furnishings were installed in five large rooms inside the Fries Museum; this suite was opened to the public in 1914. In 2013, however, the museum moved to a new state-of-the-art building and thus had to break up the only artist's residence in the Netherlands still intact in a museum. On the positive side, this situation now

gives scholars an opportunity to look more closely at the objects themselves. These include the beautiful tapestries that once hung in Bisschop’s studio: in 1914, the writer of a newspaper article suggested they had come from a castle in Utrecht. This is just one example of the pleasant scholarly journeys that lie ahead as we unravel the Bisschops’ studio-house.

Response by

Arnika Groenewald-Schmidt, Assistant Curator at the Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, Vienna

The Hall of Panels at "Casa Tadema": A *Liber Amicorum* on the Wall

In 1902, Rudolph de Cordova published an illustrated article titled "The Panels in Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema's Hall" (Fig. 12). [10] It focuses on the paintings, which eventually numbered forty-five, inserted in the wainscoting of the anteroom to Alma-Tadema's studio at 17 (now 44) Grove End Road, London. These pictures, painted by friends and family members—including such famous figures as Frederic Leighton, E.J. Poynter, and John Singer Sargent—were gifted to Lawrence and his wife Laura over more than two decades. While exchanging works was a common practice among artists, the tokens of friendship assembled in this hall were more unusual and particularly special, as each artist had responded to the challenge of a peculiar vertical format roughly 81cm in height to fit the panelling.

Figure 12.
Rudolph De Cordova, The Hall of Panels, 1902, in "The Panels in Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema's Hall" by Rudolph De Cordova, *The Strand Magazine* (December 1902): 615.

One wonders what triggered this particular project and what the ensemble might say about artistic friendships, network dynamics, and artists' self-representation. While de Cordova notes that the panels were "evidence of the esteem and affection Sir Lawrence's fellow artists entertain for him", [11] the critic Cosmo Monkhouse suggested in 1882 that the earliest panels were given to Laura for her studio in Townshend House, the Alma-Tademas' first London home:

> In the next small room … the panels of the door … as well as those between the columns of the temple-like press in the corner, are being painted with landscape, each by one of the artist's friends, Mesdag, Boughton, Bastien-Lepage, etc. [12]

Corroborating this is Laura's watercolour *May I Come In?* (1881), which depicts a door with two painted panels including *A Scene in Drenthe* by Sientje Mesdag-van Houten, providing a *terminus ante quem* for the first works (Fig. 13). [13]

Figure 13.
Laura Alma-Tadema , May I Come In?, 1881,
watercolour with pencil, gum arabic, and scratching out
on paper, 25.1 x 16.8 cm. Private collection, England.
Digital image courtesy of Private Collection.

The wainscoting, including the semi-circular structure Monkhouse had described, was transferred to the new house in Grove End Road—nicknamed Casa Tadema—where it was again extended to allow more works to be added. [14] A photograph published in *The Architect* in 1889 reveals several empty spaces to the right of the fireplace, a central feature flanked by panelling presenting twelve paintings either side. The photograph illustrating de Cordova's article suggests these were filled by 1902. According to de Cordova, "each picture was painted to fill its own particular niche in the wall of the house beautiful at St. John's Wood where Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema lives." [15] Yet photographs reveal that at least one panel, Alfred Parsons' *Apple Blossoms*, changed position between 1889 and 1902. Further research

may reveal whether the arrangement was established primarily for aesthetic reasons or whether the renown of a given artist might have determined a more or less prominent position.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that Alma-Tadema’s peers considered it a great honour to be part of his circle, probably not least because he was one of Britain’s most fashionable artists. The Alma-Tademas kept open house and often entertained colleagues, friends, and clients. Due to the central position of the hall—connecting the dining room, the library, and Laura’s atelier with Lawrence’s studio—the panels would have been seen by all visitors, effectively creating a stage for the promotion of the artists included in this ensemble, as well as for their hosts’ self-representation. Taking the Hall of Panels, its reception, and the stories behind the individual contributions as a starting point for an in-depth exploration of the Alma-Tademas and their network of friends and clients would make a valuable contribution to research on the artists, and would also provide new insights on the practice of artistic exchange.

Response by

Charles Martindale, Emeritus Professor of Latin, University of Bristol

House and Garden: A Painting by Edith Corbet

At Bonhams London on 11 July 2012, a painting was offered for sale as “A London Garden”, with no explanation given of this title’s source (Fig. 14). It is signed “Edith Corbet” and dated 1911. Edith Corbet (née Edenborough) married two painters from the group known today as the “Etruscan” School: first, Arthur Murch; and then, Matthew Ridley Corbet, who died in 1902. The Corbets lived in St John’s Wood at 54 Circus Road—just around the corner from Casa Tadema in Grove End Road. Edith was an accomplished artist whose work was commended by the Etruscans’ leader, Nino Costa, with whom she had sketched in Italy.

Figure 14.
Edith Corbet, The Garden at 17 Grove End, (original title, if any, unknown), 1911, oil on canvas, 62.2 x 45.8 cm. Private Collection. Digital image courtesy of The Maas Gallery, London / Bridgeman Images.

At Bonhams, the painting was bought by the London dealer Rupert Maas, who subsequently identified its setting as one of Lawrence Alma-Tadema's houses, albeit the wrong one. It is, in fact, the house in Grove End Road glimpsed from the garden. We can see steps leading up to the entrance, the pool, and part of the classicizing ironwork pergola installed by the house's previous occupant, the artist James Tissot, which recalls the stone colonnade in Paris' Parc Monceau, and which features in several of his paintings and prints. The pool contains irises and reeds, the latter perhaps an echo of those in John Everett Millais' *Ophelia*—so often invoked by later artists, including J.W. Waterhouse.

I interpret this painting as an homage to Alma-Tadema's classicism, even though the brushwork is more like Waterhouse's looser style than Alma-Tadema's tighter, more precise handling. Note the three sculptures, two of them certainly classical; the bust on the post at the top of the steps may depict Alma-Tadema himself. The large central statue is the famous sculpture traditionally known as the *Cincinnatus*.

Did Corbet paint what she saw, or did she reorganize for effect? We have photographs of this spot from earlier years, as well as Nicolaas van der Waay's brush-and-ink drawing (ca. 1891), which shows the *Cincinnatus* on the left-hand post. His is a fairly small version, whereas the one in Corbet's painting looms rather large—but that could be primarily a matter of perspective.

Corbet's painting evokes a strong sense of expectancy, of something magical about to happen. How are we to interpret the figure of a young woman, half hidden in the trees at right, perhaps in classical dress? Could she evoke Laura, the artist's beloved wife, who predeceased him in 1909? Or could she be a Roman woman, a revenant like Gautier's Arria Marcella or Jensen's Gradiva, immortalized in Freud's famous essay of 1907? Some nineteenth-century scholars believed that the *Cincinnatus* was really a Hermes fastening his sandal; they included the famous archaeologist Adolf Michaelis. And one of the functions of Hermes was to guide the dead, so perhaps he is bringing this woman back to life.

If there is ambiguity, it might recall Alma-Tadema's own painting *In My Studio*, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1893, which Corbet might later have seen hanging in Leighton House (Fig. 15). In that picture, we must again decide if we see a contemporary model or a figure from the classical past; indeed, the two figures are similar in costume and hairstyle. In 1910, the year before Corbet's painting, Alma-Tadema exhibited *The Voice of Spring* at the Academy, where the statue also seems almost alive—more alive in some respects than the living people (Fig. 16). There is a similar sense of expectancy, but also of sadness and loss; the young woman sitting alone on the bench has likewise been associated with the deceased Laura.

Figure 15.
Lawrence Alma-Tadema, In My Studio, 1893, oil on canvas, 59.8 x 44.5 cm. Collection of Ann and Gordon Getty. Digital image courtesy of Ann and Gordon Getty.

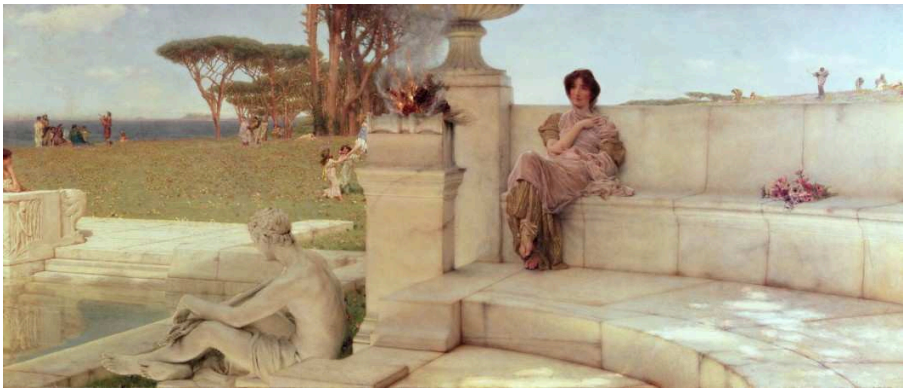

Figure 16.
Lawrence Alma-Tadema, The Voice of Spring, 1910, oil on panel, 48.8 x 115 cm. Private Collection. Digital image courtesy of Bridgeman Images.

Response by

Melissa Buron, Director of the Art Division at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco

Grove End Road: A Tale of Two Artists

Visitors who flock to traverse the famous zebra crossing in front of the Abbey Road Studios in St John's Wood in homage to The Beatles usually walk right by a studio-house that accommodated two of Victorian London's most productive immigrant artists. Number 44 (formerly number 17) Grove End Road was home to the Frenchman James Tissot (1836–1902) and then to his Dutch-born colleague Lawrence Alma-Tadema (1836–1912). There are intriguing similarities between the lives of these artists and yet their most important point of connection is arguably the house they both inhabited.

Tissot's residence was sold after he returned to Paris following the death of his muse, model, and companion, Kathleen Newton, in 1882. For Alma-Tadema, the ghosts of Tissot and Newton may have haunted his years at Grove End Road even after he transformed it into "Casa Tadema" following extensive renovations and expansion. Despite these changes, the studio-house's interior served as a recognizable setting for many Alma-Tadema compositions (e.g. *In My Studio*, 1893), as it had previously for Tissot paintings like *Hide and Seek* (ca. 1877). The grounds featured prominently in Tissot works such as *View of the Garden at 17 Grove End* (ca. 1882), and the cast-iron colonnade around a pond (based on one in Paris' Parc Monceau) appears in compositions such as *Holyday* (ca. 1876) and *Quarrelling* (ca. 1874–1876). (Edith Corbet's atmospheric painting of the garden during Alma-Tadema's ownership is illustrated in Charles Martindale's commentary.)

The lives of Tissot and Alma-Tadema share notable overlaps: born in the same year, both studied with the painter Henri Leys in Antwerp; both were foreigners in London; and both spent productive years in Grove End Road. Their respective residencies there had distinct differences, however. While Alma-Tadema hosted lavish parties with the house as a stage setting, Tissot fostered an aura of secrecy around his domestic affairs. It was rumoured salaciously by one biographer that Tissot kept Newton so sequestered at home that only the artist's friend Paul Helleu had seen her in person—by accident when he inadvertently opened the door to her room as she was undressing. [16] Alma-Tadema lived a respectable bohemian life as husband and father, while the bachelor Tissot cohabited out of wedlock with the divorced Newton, using her two children as models in staged scenes of domesticity.

Today, a blue plaque commemorates Lawrence Alma-Tadema's years of residence at the Grove End Road studio-house (1886–1912) (Fig. 17). A passing pedestrian might never know that Tissot once inhabited the same house, since he is not yet recognized with a corresponding commemoration. Although the building has changed dramatically in the intervening years, perhaps a new plaque will someday supplement the story of the *two* artists who lived consecutive creative lives in Grove End Road.

Figure 17.
English Heritage, SIR LAWRENCE ALMA-TADEMA O.M. 1836-1912 Painter lived here 1886–1912, ceramic, blue plaque erected by English Heritage in 1975 at 44 Grove End Road, St John's Wood, London, NW8 9NE, City of Westminster. Digital image courtesy of Peter Trippi

Response by

Krystyna Matyjaszkiewicz, Independent Art Historian and Curator

James Tissot's Studio-Houses

For some years, I have been researching the work of the anglophile French artist James Tissot (1836–1902), who created a succession of studio-houses. His homes and collections were an inspiration for, and the subject of, many of his images.

In Paris, Tissot had a small English-style villa, located off the Avenue de l'Impératrice (now Avenue Foch), with a comparatively modest conservatory and garden. The house no longer exists but parts of it were used by Tissot as settings for his pictures. In them, we are able to see room interiors, furniture, and fittings, including newly imported items from Japan and China, as well as eighteenth-century European pieces.

When Tissot settled in London after the Franco-Prussian War, his house and garden at 17 Grove End Road, St John's Wood, were equally conducive to work. The paintings created there provide so much detail that the art historian Mireille Galinou and the illustrator Stephen Conlin have reconstructed how the house and gardens looked before and after the artist's additions. The latter included a large studio and conservatory extension, designed by the Scottish architect John McKean Brydon, and various plantings, trellises, and colonnades outdoors (Figs. 18 and 19).

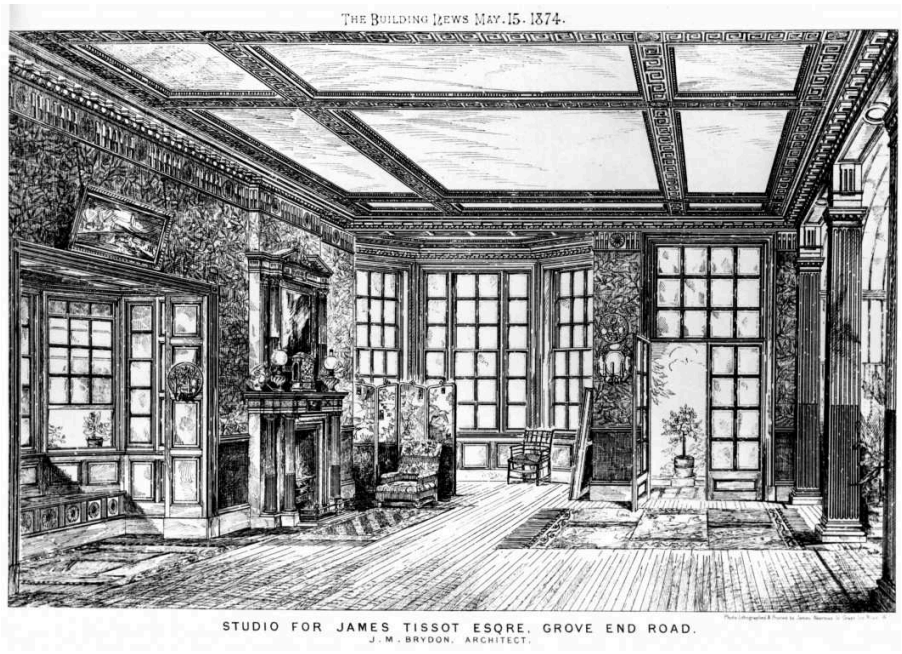

Figure 18.
John McKean Brydon, Studio for James Tissot Esq., Grove End Road, in *Building News*, 15 May 1874, 526.

Figure 19.
James Tissot, Afternoon Tea (or In the Conservatory), ca. 1874, oil on canvas, 38.4 x 51.1 cm. Private Collection. Digital image courtesy of Christie’s Images.

Tissot's Paris home had been modelled externally on "English villas", but inside it was fitted out in French style. Some French elements were then echoed in the London house, including French windows and the plantings and colonnaded pool of Paris' Parc Monceau. In these ways, each house became a "home-from-home" of favourite things from the other side of the Channel. In building his London studio, Tissot also took the opportunity to incorporate a favourite English element: a bay window modelled on ones seen in Thames-side taverns, providing the artist with a much-loved picture setting on his own doorstep. Lawrence Alma-Tadema, the house's next owner, relocated this bay window when he had the building greatly enlarged between 1883 and 1886. Traces of Tissot's interior fittings can be seen in some of Laura Alma-Tadema's paintings. His plant-filled conservatory remained, just inside the Alma-Tademas' new entrance, and the garden spaces stayed as Tissot had left them. (For details on the latter, see Charles Martindale's contribution.)

There is still much to be explored relating to the spaces Tissot depicted, his choices of setting and props, and his working practices in the various studios. We know, for example, that he used the additional garden studio he built at Grove End Road to prepare and print his etchings, and we can speculate that he also made his cloisonné enamels there. After Tissot's return to Paris in 1882, and during his subsequent visits to the Holy Land, we have descriptions of how Tissot worked on illustrating the life of Christ. His illustrations for the Old Testament, uncompleted at his death, were partly done in Tissot's final studio, again designed by Brydon, at the Château de Buillon, the artist's country house near Besançon in south-eastern France. His additions there were in a rustic "English cottage" style, including the gardens that were barely established when Tissot died there suddenly in 1902.

Response by

Madeline Boden, Doctoral Candidate in the History of Art Department, University of York

Leighton House: Private Collection and Public Display

Upon completion of the Arab Hall in 1878, journalists were invited to Leighton's studio-house to marvel at this "remarkable museum", where a visitor could "study Orientalism and become infused with the best influences of Eastern art and decoration." [17] As the writers moved beyond the Arab Hall into different rooms, their commentaries reveal a tangible appreciation for the sheer number of Eastern "things" displayed across the house—ceramics, tiles, bronzes, textiles, and carpets—an appreciation impossible today for one simple, frustrating reason: the original collection was broken up and sold off after Leighton's death in 1896, and much of its inventory remains untraced. The dispersal of this collection has obscured the fact that Leighton collected prodigiously during his trips to Turkey, Syria, Egypt, and Algeria. A crucial visual element of Leighton House has been lost because we are not able to see this multitude of objects *in situ*.

However, by tracing and reimagining many of these objects back into the house through use of the 1896 Christie's auction catalogue and museum records, we can see parallels emerging that reveal Leighton House as a key site in the network of artists' studio-houses across London. It was, moreover, on a par with the national museums and private collections that were, at this same moment, forming Britain's finest Eastern ceramic collections.

Previous interpretations of Leighton's studio-house have assumed that it conforms to the allegiance to Far Eastern (Japanese and Chinese) objects traditionally associated with Aestheticism and the House Beautiful. To see Leighton's collection, instead, in the light of his travels in the Near East and North Africa can therefore transform our understanding of his interior design. This new perspective draws on Mary Roberts' very persuasive idea of networked objects, which traces "the mobility of art works across cultural boundaries". [18] Bought and brought back across land and sea, these objects were transformed and recontextualised as they travelled; their identity remained both unstable and contested during their time at Leighton House.

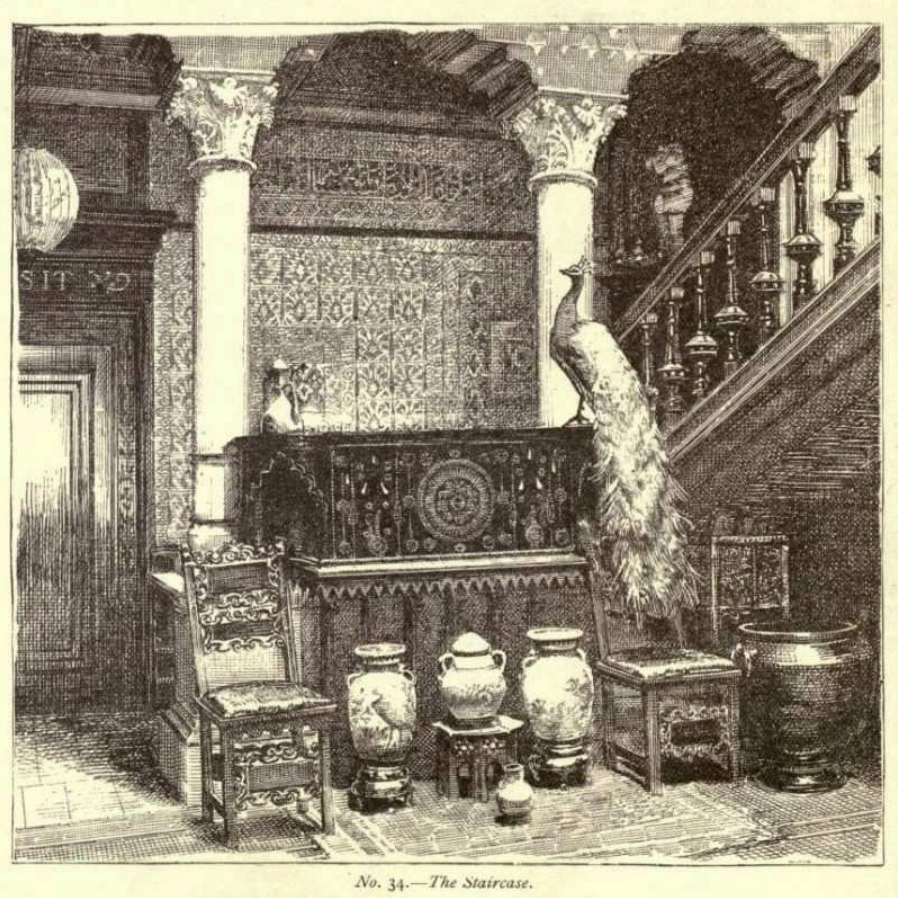

Figure 20.
No. 34 – The Staircase, in *The Life and Work of Sir Frederick [sic] Leighton, Bart* edited by Mrs A. [Leonora] Lang (London: Art Journal Office, 26, 1886).

For a brief time in 1885, when he loaned them to a public exhibition at the Burlington Fine Arts Club, Leighton's ceramics were co-opted into the narratives of display and interpretation that national museums and private collectors were formulating around Near Eastern art. Leighton's ceramics were displayed for the first time with labels, written by fellow artist and traveller Henry Wallis, that designated them as "Rhodian", "Iznik", and "Persian"—all terms with contested definitions being debated through the texts written by the lenders to such exhibitions. Leighton's objects, while in his studio-house, eschewed the taxonomic impulse: his alternative mode of presentation there integrated the collection as a curated studio-house display, inexorably tying it to the domestic interior (Fig. 20).

How does Leighton's engagement in the emerging popularity of collecting Eastern ceramics change our view of his house? Most obviously, and maybe in keeping with the Alma-Tademas' project, Leighton House was not only a space where works of art were created but where works (importantly, not paintings) by non-British artists were displayed. The collection also allowed

Leighton to express a different side of his cosmopolitanism—that of the artist-traveller and adventurer akin to Captain Richard Burton or Austen Henry Layard, thereby implicating his Aestheticism in a previously unaccounted-for Imperial mode. Most interesting, perhaps, is the way in which the studio-house is opened up in far more global ways.

Response by

Stephen Calloway, Art Historian and Exhibitions Curator

Rossetti at Tudor House

Dante Gabriel Rossetti first took an interest in interior decoration while he occupied rooms at Chatham Place in Blackfriars. In a letter, he described and sketched an ambitious design for wallpaper:

> I shall have it printed on common brown packing paper and on blue grocer's paper, to try which is best. The trees are to stand the whole height of the room, the stems and fruit will be Venetian red—the leaves black. The effect of the whole will be rather sombre but I think rich also. [19]

Rossetti was also involved with William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones in creating "medieval" painted chairs and cabinets for their Red Lion Square rooms and in the more fully realized schemes of furnishings for Morris's Red House. These enthusiasms found a more commercial expression in the friends' collaboration as "art workmen" in "The Firm" (the company Morris & Co.).

Following his wife Elizabeth Siddal's death in 1862, Rossetti leased Tudor House on Cheyne Walk in Chelsea, intending to share it with his brother William Michael, the writer Algernon Swinburne, and the writer George Meredith, who described it as "a strange, quaint, grand old place, with an immense garden, magnificent panelled staircases and rooms—a palace." [20] Rossetti began to decorate the house, painting the panelling in rich blues and greens (prophetic of "Aesthetic" taste) and filling the rooms with highly miscellaneous collections of old furniture, pictures, china, and other objects.

Henry Treffry Dunn, who became Rossetti's studio assistant, described his first sight of the artist's bedroom:

> I thought it a most unhealthy place to sleep in. Thick curtains, heavy with crewel work in designs of print and foliage [sic] hung closely drawn round an antiquated four-poster bedstead. This he had bought out of an old furniture shop somewhere in the slums of Lambeth (if not a dealer's make-up it certainly looked old enough to belong to the period). A massive panelled oak mantelpiece reached from the floor to the ceiling, fitted up with

numerous shelves and cupboard-like recesses, all filled with a medley assortment of brass repoussé dishes, blue china vases filled with peacock feathers, oddly-fashioned early English and foreign candlesticks, Chinese monstrosities in bronze, and various other curiosities. [21]

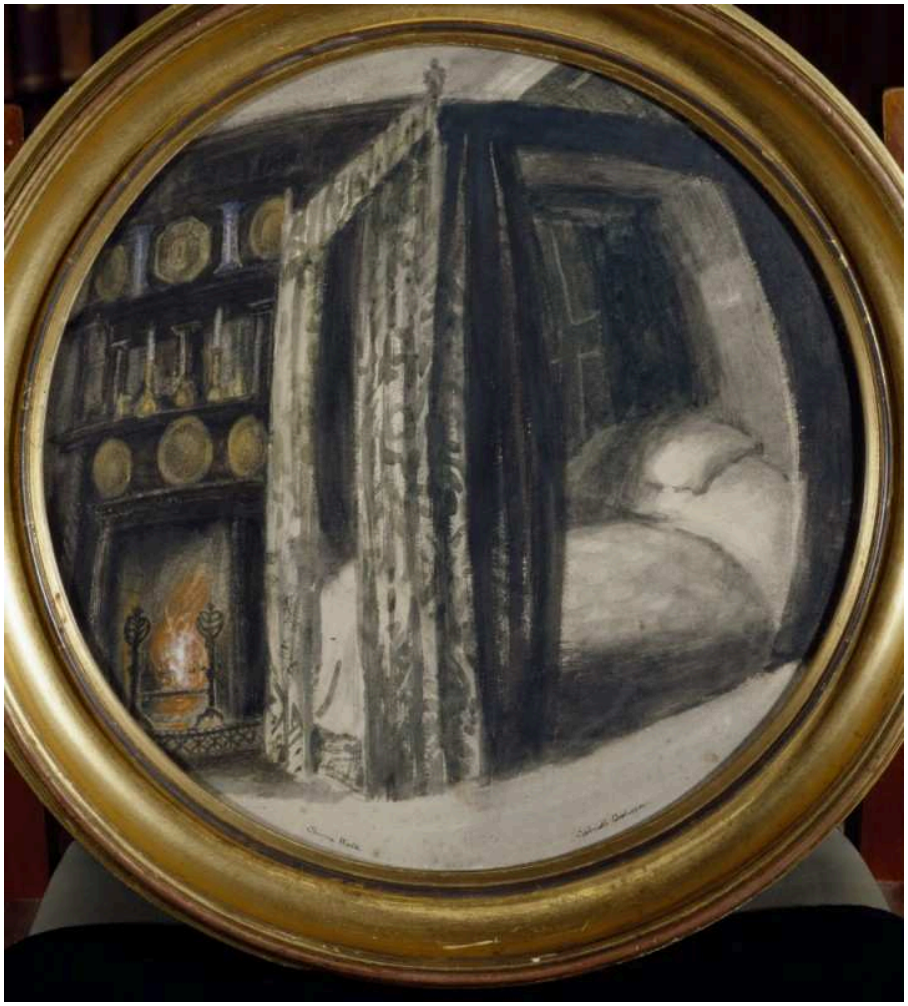

Figure 21.
Henry Treffry Dunn, Dante Gabriel Rossetti's Bedroom at Tudor House, 16 Cheyne Walk, 1872, watercolour on paper, 33.5 cm (diameter). Collection of Wightwick Manor, West Midlands, National Trust (NT 1287978). Digital image courtesy of National Trust Images.

Some visual evidence survives. Illustrated here is Dunn's watercolour study (Fig. 21); it shows the bedroom mantelpiece reflected in a convex mirror and was apparently made in preparation for painting the similar reflection in a convex mirror seen in Rossetti's painting *La Bella Mano* of 1875. Dunn's more famous interior views of Tudor House were painted in 1882 as records immediately before its contents were dispersed at auction following

Rossetti’s death. The sale catalogue for that dispersal provides crucial documentation of Rossetti’s collection and today some objects with established (or reputed) Tudor House provenance can be identified.

After Rossetti’s breakdown in the mid-1870s, few people outside his immediate circle visited Tudor House, yet its fame continued to grow. His taste in furnishings and, in particular, his combination of objects from different periods and cultures was influential and much imitated among the Aesthetes. In his Rossetti monograph (1895), Marillier explained it thus:

> Rossetti in spite of his entire indifference to the outside public, had a wonderful way of infecting it with his own predilections and taste. … He had borne a leading share in the Morris decorative movement; and now he was destined to pave the way for the modern craze for old oak furniture and blue china. Bric-à-brac was not of much account in England when Rossetti first began rummaging the dealers’ shops … it was a purely original idea in those days to buy up old furniture for use, and to enrich the walls of a house with … treasures from Japan. Those who follow the fashion today do it in many cases vulgarly and unintelligently, turning their houses into museums of costly and incongruous objects. So far as decoration went Rossetti knew to a hairbreadth what would harmonise and what would not … his judgment was a touchstone. [22]

Response by

Barbara Bryant, Independent Art Historian and Consultant Curator

Artists on Display

Celebrity artists of the later Victorian era required statement residences to conduct their careers and their lives; their studio-houses are a cultural phenomenon that merits investigation from diverse perspectives using a range of resources. Reconstructing and reimagining lost houses can be achieved with historical evidence including architectural drawings, archival photographs, illustrations, and descriptions in the contemporary periodical press. The afterlives of these multifaceted buildings offer compelling evidence of artistic legacies and changes in taste.

In 1874, when George Frederic Watts commissioned the architect Frederick Pepys Cockerell to construct a studio-house in Melbury Road, Holland Park, he did so to promote his career and to keep pace with his artist friends Frederic Leighton and Valentine Prinsep living nearby. After enjoying success at the inaugural Grosvenor Gallery exhibition, then at a one-man show with another planned, Watts decided to expand his studio-house in 1881: he employed Leighton's architect George Aitchison to add a large picture gallery, which he intended to open to the public.

The image of Watts illustrated here appeared in the lavish volume *Artists at Home* (1884), which contained photographs by J.P. Mayall and text by F.G. Stephens (Fig. 22). [23] Quite rightly this image has become synonymous with the artist and his aspirations, but having become overfamiliar, it now needs unpacking and contextualizing. With Watts's studio-house no longer extant, investigating its physical set-up has required close study of the relevant primary sources. In its final incarnation, the house contained studios for painting and for sculpture, as well as the glass-roofed gallery with dark vermilion red walls.

View this illustration online

Figure 22.
Photogravure after J.P. Mayall's photograph, G.F. Watts in the Little Holland House Gallery, in F.G. Stephens (ed.), *Artists at Home* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, and Rivington, 1884). Digital image courtesy of Watts Gallery Archive.

Its architectural plan reveals a route for visitors from the front entrance directly into the gallery, thus ensuring its separation from the house's domestic areas and workspaces. Watts carefully controlled—one might say curated—the display of his own art from the 1880s onwards. The varied hang implied the totality of his output, while the inclusion of oil sketches and unfinished works helped viewers follow his process, underscoring the notion of an artist as a creator, or even as a genius, at work. This gallery became the key to Watts' status, functioning as a stage for his performance as an artist, a place where he constructed his self-image. No other artist in London had a comparable arrangement.

Other artists' studio-houses of the period embodied related themes of display, celebrity, and self-fashioning. Leighton acquired and carefully arranged his collection of historical and contemporary artworks [24] within what Jason Edwards has called this artist's "encrypted environment". [25] Designed by Richard Norman Shaw, Frank Holl's Three Gables (1882) is no longer extant, [26] another victim of the lack of regard for Victorian architecture in the mid-twentieth century. Fortunately, a wealth of material, including Shaw's beautiful architectural drawings, show the exterior and interior of the house, revealing it as a place of work and sociability. Finally,

Mortimer Menpes’ Japanese-themed house in Sloane Square, Chelsea, was a bizarre example of one artist staging Japonisme as a professional and lifestyle choice in London during the 1890s. [27]

Response by

Kate Nichols, Birmingham Fellow in the Department of Art History, Curating and Visual Studies, University of Birmingham

Animals in the Studio-House

> “Workshop” is an exceedingly applicable name for the studio which has seen the birth of many of Mr Riviere’s pictures. It may at once be said that it is not the studio of a Leighton or an Alma Tadema. The floor is utterly devoid of luxurious and costly carpets and rugs. Dogs and horses, sheep and pigs, are not calculated to improve the quality of an expensive carpet, or add to its lasting capabilities. The floor is elaborately decorated with scratches from many a dog’s paw and horse’s hoof. [28]

Figure 23.
After Frank Dudman for J.P. Mayall, Briton Riviere, photograph, in F.G. Stephens (ed.), *Artists at Home* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, and Rivington,1884), plate 20, photogravure, 1883, 21.6 x 16.4 cm. Collection of National Portrait Gallery (NPG Ax27831). Digital image courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, London.

The animal painter Briton Riviere's London studio was consistently characterised as austere and distinct from those of his non-animal painting contemporaries, and the destructive capabilities of his non-human models were a regular feature of discussion. Located at 82 Finchley Road, his house also contained a more conventional area where Riviere posed as painter in the photographs that illustrated these articles (Fig. 23), as well as a straw-bedded stable zone for his models, sadly never shown in the photographic record. Yet even without the straw-strewn floor, the more presentable end of Riviere's studio visible here is distinct from those of his artistic colleagues, with its disembodied animal skins and skeletons.

The absent animal modelling area dovetails with my own research into absences in artists' studio-houses. To what extent is it possible to uncover the agency of artists' models in general—and animal models in particular? How did these actors assert their presence? Riviere's animal subjects are said to have physically impacted upon the studio, their living, stamping, scratching, and defecating bodies reshaping the visual and olfactory experience of a studio-house. [29]

Riviere's studio, however, was just a small part of his process, for he painted only domestic animals there. Famously, he sketched more exotic species at London Zoo, which was in walking distance of his studio-house. Some of these animals did eventually enter his studio as cadavers to be dissected, articulated, and used for anatomical study—as shown in this photograph.

Many of these animals had arrived in London as by-products of imperial endeavour, and my research into animals in studios is part of a broader project that explores the global and specifically imperial contexts of the making and reception of nineteenth-century painting. Natasha Eaton has considered how the presence of pigments on an artist's palette, as she puts it, "raw and rare substances from across the globe that wait to be transformed … invites us to think through imperial networks and their coming together, their assemblage as paint to be (re)mixed." [30] Similarly, the nineteenth-century studio-house was a metropolitan crucible where not just the local and global materials of art might come together, but also where the domestic and exotic flora and fauna of Britain and its empire were assembled and rendered anew on canvas or in clay.

Response by

Melanie Polledri, Doctoral Candidate in the History of Art Department, University of York

Framing Networks: The Artist's Studio

Figure 24.
Bedford Lemere & Co., London, William Goscombe John in his upper studio, St John's Wood, London, date unknown, photograph. Digital image courtesy of National Museum Wales, Cardiff.

Taken during 1930s, Bedford Lemere & Co.'s photograph encourages us to consider the extent of the Welsh-born New Sculptor William Goscombe John's networks—as a Royal Academician, as a patriotic Welshman, and as a son of the British Empire (Fig. 24). It shows John sitting crossed-legged, nonchalantly reading a book in his upper studio. Devoid of any workman-like paraphernalia, which was confined to his workshop below, this hallowed space was reserved for the hosting of auspicious events, such as the John family's musical evenings attended by the great and the good of St John's Wood, London, and farther afield. Presenting the ageing sculptor centre stage, surrounded by art objects that span the Empire, the photograph charts John's fifty-year career, mapping his networks from Paris, Rodin, and the promotion of sculptural modernisms at the National Museum Cardiff, to wider debates on centre–periphery and artist–artisan.

Through John, these objects evoke Bruno Latour's non-human "actants", as they articulate and disseminate specific national and international knowledge, politics, and power relations. [31] To pick just a few, John's *The Elf* (1898, at far right in the photograph here),deposited as his Diploma work at the Royal Academy upon election as a Royal Academician, connects him to English, Welsh, and Scottish art institutions. The *Drummer Boy*, a statuette-sized model from the King's Regiment monument in Liverpool (1904, left of *The Elf*) connects John with the South African Wars, the Belgian Congo, Empire, and Welsh nationalism, as well as the soap magnate, William Hesketh Lever and the ethnographic sculptor Herbert Ward. Of the two equestrian models, the *Tredegar Monument* (1906–1910, centre), a launch pad for works such as the *Viscount Minto* (left of the *Drummer Boy*), takes John on an imperial journey from Cardiff via London to Calcutta. The *St John the Baptist* (1894, centre) forges links to Rodin, Paris, and the Marquess of Bute's homes at Cardiff Castle and Regent's Park. Alfred Gilbert's prominently placed *Icarus* (far left) and *Head of Girl* (left of *Viscount Minto*, both 1884), reflect Parisian and Renaissance influences, and tie John to the New Sculpture scene in London. Juxtapositional relationships also emerge: John's *Boy Scout* (1910, centre right), while formally mirroring Gilbert's *Icarus*, evokes Empire, the First World War, and Wales. Alluding to John's homoerotic sensitivities, the *Boy Scout* partially obscures John Singer Sargent's watercolour of a reclining male nude (ca. 1900). [32] These, as part of a central subgroup, including John, the *Tredegar Monument*, and the *St John*, contribute to debates on imperial masculinities.

Within this interior, these art-historical and geo-political landscapes are drawn centripetally to John. The transnational and global become local; objects, locations, and geographies—as sites for production, exhibition, and representation—are brought together within one imperial frame at the heart of Empire. [33] Yet, simultaneously, they radiate centrifugally outwards beyond these boundaries. In untangling such interwoven connections, new relationships emerge that help us consider the broader implications of late nineteenth-century imperial networking practices that connected people, places, and institutions.

Response by

Jason Edwards, Professor of Art History, University of York

Eternal Treblinka? The Unaesthetic Interior, or, Turner's Cats

William Leighton Leitch provided a suggestive account of Turner's studio-house in Queen Anne Street, London, after he visited it in the mid-1840s, paying particular attention to the resident cats. Lost in a reverie, Leitch recalled suddenly "feeling something warm and soft" moving across the back of his neck and shoulders, and, turning his head, he found a "most peculiarly ugly", "dirty whitish", "broad-faced cat", with its "fur sticking out", and whose "pinky" eyes "glared and glimmered" at Leitch in an "unearthly manner". Leitch put up his hand to "shove the creature away", and, in so doing, let his umbrella fall, startling four or five other cats, by then moving about his legs in an "alarming way". Leitch "did not like the thing at all", so picked up his umbrella and made for the door, quickly getting to the foot of the stairs. On looking back, he saw a number of cats at the top glaring at him, every one "without a tail". [34]

That Turner owned Manx cats is a perhaps surprising thing to draw attention to in an essay on artists' studio-houses (Fig. 25). But the way Turner prioritized his cats should give us pause for thought. After all, Leitch also documented that Turner's *Fishing upon the Blythe-Sand* (1809) was not well "looked after", and "served as the blind to a window that was the private *entrée* of the painter's favourite cat, who one day, indignant at finding" it in her way, "left the autograph of her 'Ten Commandments'" on it. [35] Whilst Leitch was appalled, Turner did not mind the cat's scratching or spraying, saying to his housekeeper, "Oh, never mind". His lack of irritation encourages us to rethink Victorian studio-houses in more *humanamimal*, rather than *anthropocentric* terms. After all, Turner not only had cats, and frequently depicted animals in his pictures, but self-consciously employed whale oil and beeswax in his paint, and used brushes made of hog-, badger-, and horse-hair. Whilst such "raw" animal materials are the conventional stuff of a painter's trade, Turner's cats, and the birds who flew in through the skylight and took up residence in the studio, inspire us to think about questions of artistic/animalistic co-agency. If the pigeons crapped involuntarily on the canvases, the cats knew what they were doing when they scratched or scented the pictures, and Turner did not mind, or relished, their cooperation.

Figure 25.
Joseph Mallord William Turner , Study of a Sleeping Cat, ca. 1796–1797, chalk and watercolour on paper. 23.8 x 27.8 cm. Collection Tate, London (D40247). Digital image courtesy of Tate Images.

In this moment of unprecedented extinction, we need to pay more attention to the ghosts of animals littered across art history, and to crediting their co-agency. Otherwise we will be even more guilty, than we are already, of contributing to the “eternal Treblinka” going on around us, every day. [36]

Response by

Joanna Banham, Director, Victorian Society Summer School

The Studio and Bohemia

The Portrait (1880) was painted by Dewey Bates (1851–1898), a little-known and only moderately successful artist who was born in Philadelphia, studied in Antwerp and Paris, and settled in England in 1878 (Fig. 26). His depiction of a comparatively modest painting room provides a useful counterpoint to the opulence characteristic of wealthy Victorian artists' "Show Studios". More significantly, this representation of artful disarray relates to contemporary literary and visual narratives about artists and Bohemia.

Figure 26.
Dewey Bates, The Portrait, 1880, watercolour on paper, 22.9 x 33 cm. Private Collection. Digital image courtesy of Peter Nahum, Leicester Galleries.

The domestic character of Bates' interior reminds us that most artists adapted rooms in houses as their studios; the inspiration for this scene may well have come from Bates' own workspace. He rented several accommodations during his first years in London, all in Fitzrovia and Bloomsbury, areas affording cheap rents and thus popular with artists. Or this interior may have been based on an upstairs room in the detached villa in Streatham where Bates lodged between 1879 and 1881.

Yet it would be naïve to imagine that this interior has not been assembled carefully: it contains a plethora of objects emphasising its owner's affiliation with the fashionable aesthetic style. Japanese influences are especially prominent in the painted screen, prints, and De Morgan-esque tiles set into the fireplace. The luxurious textile draped over the easel, the richly embroidered cushion, and the reproduction of Giambologna's *Mercury* are equally striking signifiers of refined artistic taste. The tools of the painter's profession are also much in evidence: the easel, palette on the wall, colours on the floor, brushes and sketches on the table, and many paintings propped against walls. A particularly intriguing feature at far right is the framed painting standing on its side—a miniature replica of *The Portrait* itself.

By 1880, similar Japanese and aesthetic accessories were routinely associated with artistic interiors and appeared in images of studios belonging to, for example, Alma-Tadema, Tissot, Eakins, and Chase. But the influence of the artistic milieu of Paris, where Bates had trained, and of the proliferating literary narratives about artists and Bohemia were arguably more significant. These two strands came together in fictional accounts like Du Maurier's *Trilby* (1890), which echoed the formula of social, sexual, and creative freedom first established in Henri Murger's *Scènes de la Vie de Bohème* (1850). Thereafter, countless novels described the lives of tortured geniuses indifferent to convention; studios that were the antithesis of ordered domestic taste became a cliché of the genre.

Finally, *The Portrait* can be read as a commentary on class, gender, and the act of looking. The room is modest and untidy but not impoverished or squalid. The champagne bottle, playing cards, and long-stemmed pipe denote a bachelor Bohemianism, but the invitations on the mantelpiece suggest an existence by no means outside the realms of feminine and fashionable society. The costly and exotic objects, artfully strewn around the room, reveal the artist's refinement, not his disregard for beauty. And, despite the many signifiers of masculinity, the interior appears both decorative and feminine, not least due to the prominence given to the elegantly dressed woman scrutinising another woman in the portrait on the easel. Women in depictions of studios were usually models, often half-dressed, displayed for the artist's and viewers' inspection. Bates' painting presents a refreshing reversal of these roles. His sitter is the social equal—perhaps the superior—of the artist, her face is turned away, and it is she who is engaged in looking at—maybe judging—the artist's skills.

Response by

Jan Dirk Baetens, Professor of Art History and Cultural Studies, Radboud University Nijmegen

Come Dine *Without* Me*: The Dining Room in the House of Henri Leys* by Henri De Braekeleer (1869)

In 1869, the Belgian Henri De Braekeleer made a painting of the dining room of his uncle and teacher (and Alma-Tadema's former teacher), the celebrated history and historical genre painter Henri Leys (1815–1869) (Fig. 27). [37] It was commissioned by Leys' close friend and dealer Gustave Coûteaux following his unexpected death a few months earlier. Coûteaux may have seen it as a tribute, but he undoubtedly also recognised its commercial potential. This room was famous for its historicising murals executed by Leys himself in the late 1850s and early 1860s. It had long attracted artists, critics, and other admirers from across Europe and would continue to do so. A few years before Leys' death, the powerful Anglo-Belgian dealer Ernest Gambart had joined with the French publisher Auguste Poulet-Malassis to finance a series of etchings by Félix Bracquemond after the murals. [38] Only one etching was completed, but Gambart managed to buy a set of five replicas of the murals, made by Leys himself, which he then exhibited for sale at his London gallery. [39] Photographs of some of the replicas had also been published by the Parisian entrepreneur Louis Martinet, while the Belgian photographer Edmond Fierlants sold them in various formats. [40]

Figure 27.
Henri De Braekeleer, The Dining Room in the House of Henri Leys, 1869, oil on canvas, 67 x 84 cm. The Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp (1358). Digital image courtesy of The Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp / Photo: Hugo Maertens

De Braekeleer painted what initially seems to be a faithful, almost photographic, depiction. Not unexpectedly, it draws attention to the historicising decor and especially the murals, which take up roughly one-third of the composition. Yet there is more here than meets the eye. Although little happens in De Braekeleer's *œuvre* of hushed interiors, they often seem to evoke another dimension, perhaps some mysterious haunting presence, or a life they lead on their own. As Alison Hokanson has explained, De Braekeleer's interiors, including this one, seem to anticipate symbolist notions that would gain currency in Belgian avant-garde circles only in the 1880s and 1890s, especially in the work of Xavier Mellery. [41] In particular, his scenes indicate a remarkably early interest in the symbolist idea of "the soul of things", the ungraspable spirit of inanimate objects, including the interiors such objects adorn, formed by memories of the humans who occupied them.

The Dining Room in the House of Henri Leys is also a very personal tribute from De Braekeleer to his mentor. As such, it is a meditation on the (im)possibility of bringing the past back to life, as Leys' historicising art had once done. The murals in Leys' dining room are a good example. They show the preparations for a feast in a sixteenth-century city, with people walking to the festivities, calling at their host's house, and being greeted by him and

his family. Yet the feast itself is not depicted, and its absence implicitly invites Leys' own guests to bring the narrative to a close in modern time: to participate in the invisible feast in his sixteenth-century-styled room. Thus, the past could actually be recovered in one's lived experience. [42]

Such a resurrection is no longer possible in De Braekeleer's painting. The dining room is abandoned; the skewed perspective seems to elongate it, emphasising the emptiness. Absence is underscored by suggestions of recent human activity: the table's casters indicate it has just been moved to the left. Pushed against the walls, the chairs are strikingly empty. What remains are the whispering ghosts in Leys' murals, though there too the impossibility of bringing back the past is stressed. Leys portrayed himself and his family above the fireplace at far left in De Braekeleer's painting. De Braekeleer, however, framed his scene in such a way that they are just outside the composition: even in paint, Leys cannot be brought back. Coûteaux, upon seeing this painting or a sketch for it, instructed De Braekeleer to add one or more figures, but the artist apparently declined or could not comply. [43] Absence, it seems, was essential in this painting.

The Dining Room, then, is not a mere document, but a complex work of art that can be considered a commercial venture, a proto-symbolist scene, and a personal mourning. Many nineteenth-century representations of artists' studio-houses are cherished primarily for their documentary value. Only rarely do we take them as significant works of art in their own right. De Braekeleer's scene perhaps suggests that we should do so more often.

Response by

Morna O'Neill, Associate Professor at Wake Forest University and co-editor, homesubjects.org

Edwardian *Homage*: The Artist's Studio and the Art Dealer

In 1909, the Irish artist William Orpen commemorated a gathering of friends with this painting, *Homage to Manet* (Fig. 28). Six men sit or stand around a table ready for tea, posed beneath a painting by the French Impressionist artist Edouard Manet, his 1870 portrait of his student Eva Gonzalès. The group includes Orpen's fellow artists Philip Wilson Steer, seated at the table below the painting, and Walter Sickert, standing off to the right. They are joined by the artist and influential art teacher Henry Tonks, the art critic and curator D.S. MacColl, and the Irish novelist and art critic George Moore. They listen as Moore reads from his *Reminiscences of Impressionist Painters* (1906), which recounted his youthful friendships in Paris, especially with Manet. The one who listens most intently, hand to his head in concentration, is the one who made this homage possible: the art dealer, collector, and philanthropist Hugh Lane. He purchased the painting in 1906 from the Parisian art dealer Paul Durand-Ruel and loaned it to Orpen to hang in his studio.

Figure 28.
William Orpen, Homage to Manet, 1909, oil on canvas, 162.9 x 130 cm. Collection Manchester Art Gallery (1910.9). Digital image courtesy of Manchester City Galleries / Bridgeman Images.

The physical space of *Homage* is that of Orpen's own studio in South Bolton Gardens, Kensington, where he worked between 1906 and his death in 1931. Lane lived in the rooms below Orpen's studio from 1906 to 1909. An air of easy familiarity with masterpieces is evident in Orpen's painting: the Manet presides over comfortably upholstered furnishings, a casually discarded hat and gloves, and the table set for tea. Orpen's painting treats Manet's portrait as part of an ensemble in the same way that interior design displays paintings in relation to decorative and functional objects—it is this kind of associative property of the artist's studio that Theodor Adorno highlights in his essay "Valéry Proust Museum". The studio is the place of art's immediacy, where it is protected from the "barbarity" of the museum. [44]

Recent scholarship has turned to the domestic interior as a generative site for cultural meaning, addressing the ways in which the decoration of the private interior was a means of formulating the public self. [45] Likewise, the combination of public business and private life in the formulation “artist’s studio-home” contradicts the prevailing interpretation of the domestic interior as a retreat from the public self. Walter Benjamin, for one, opposed the office and the drawing room. While the office was “reality”, the domestic interior was a “phantasmagoria”, the realistic illusion of another world, another state of being: “the private individual, who in the office has to deal with realities, needs the domestic interior to sustain him in his illusions” that his life can escape commodity culture and the marketplace. [46] Recent scholarship has returned to Benjamin’s insight to address the role of the domestic interior in the construction of masculinity even as it has reiterated his central claim: the domestic interior is a retreat from the world of work for the modern man. [47] Yet the artist in his studio-home made “the illusion” of the domestic interior central to his business.

Response by

Caroline van Eck, Professor of Art History and Director of Studies at King's College, University of Cambridge

The Wiertz Museum, Brussels

In 1851, when he was forty-five, the painter Antoine Wiertz (1806–1865) obtained from the Belgian government a large house and studio in Brussels in which to live and work. By this time, Wiertz seemed to have a great future behind him. Born to poor parents, his artistic talents had been discovered while he was in his teens, and in 1821, he obtained a stipend from King William I of the Netherlands to study at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp. In 1832, Wiertz won the Prix de Rome, which enabled him to spend three years in that city. The major work he produced there, the colossal *The Greeks and Trojans Fighting over the Corpse of Patroclus* (1836), was refused for the Paris Salon of 1838 and was greeted elsewhere only with ridicule.

Upon his return to Brussels, Wiertz developed several highly original strategies to transform this failure into triumph. Establishing his own museum was central to this plan. He embarked on a systematic series of emulations of historical painters (Rubens, Michelangelo) and genres (altarpieces, portraits, historical scenes, heroic and allegorical sculpture). As Wiertz put it in his autobiography: "Peintre, il avait pris Rubens pour émule, sculpteur, il veut s'attaquer au Laocoon" ["As a painter, he decided to emulate Rubens, as a sculptor he wanted to take on the Laocoon"]. [48] After his failure at the Paris Salon, he refused to compete for commercial success in the usual way: rather than selling his works, he displayed them in his studio-museum. Thus, this space became the means through which Wiertz could achieve several aims at the same time. First, to establish himself as his country's leading artist, an ambition which the government of the recently formed Kingdom of the Belgians supported wholeheartedly. Second, to avoid having to deal with the art trade, the public, or the Brussels and Paris Salons, all of which he professed to despise equally; instead, he sought to control his own image and critical fortunes. And finally, to offer tangible proof of his conviction that Brussels, not Paris, was the centre of the artistic world: "Bruxelles capitale, Paris province", as he put it in one of his manifestos.

Wiertz left his museum to the Belgian state on condition that the building and collections would never be changed (Fig. 29). It remains open to the public, displaying the large paintings that are decaying rapidly because his experiments with oils dried out too quickly. Also on view are Wiertz's smaller portraits, plaster and terracotta sculptural models, and highly original paintings that comment on social and political events such as the French Revolution, Napoleonic wars, and famines that regularly plagued Belgium.

Although Wiertz saw himself as the artistic heir to Rubens, in many respects his subjects, political engagement, and colossal ambition make him closer to Victor Hugo, who for some time was a fellow citizen of Brussels, and who created several artist's houses himself.

Figure 29.
Interior of the Wiertz Museum, *Elsene, Brussels*. Digital image courtesy of Musées Royaux Des Beaux-Arts de Belgique / Photo: Alfred de Ville de Goyet

Response by

MaryAnne Stevens, Independent Art Historian and Curator

Astruptunet: Home and Farmstead of the Artist Nikolai Astrup (1880–1928)

Located in Western Norway, Astruptunet was created from 1912 by the Norwegian artist Nikolai Astrup (1880–1928) (Fig. 30). [49] Astrup sought to craft a distinct visual language reflecting the deeply felt experience of his childhood landscape of Jølster, seen through recollection and memory; his engagement with the emerging modernisms of the early twentieth century; and his response to the call for national political, social, and cultural identity. He achieved these through his increasingly non-naturalist, expressionist painting, his highly innovative and experimental woodcuts, and his creation of Astruptunet.

View this illustration online

Figure 30.
Astruptunet (Jølster, Sogn og Fordane, Western Norway), photographed in 2015 from above, looking north across Jølstravatnet towards Ålhus, where Nikolai Astrup had lived from 1882 to 1911 (his studio is on the top floor of the right-hand building). Digital image courtesy of Oddleiv Apneseth, 2015.

Perched precariously on the north-facing slope of Jølstravatnet, the artist's home was the product of bringing together eight old, local, wooden buildings to create four elements, the largest of which also accommodated the studio, completed two years before Astrup's death. The garden and farmstead consisted of sculpted turf walls and terraces on which fruit bushes and rhubarb grew, plots for the cultivation of vegetables, an apple and cherry orchard, flower beds and meadows, and an inner and outer field on which goats and a small number of cows would graze. Astrup also created a grotto adjacent to one of the three streams that tumbled down the steep mountainside, planted fruit and birch trees at the property's lower access to

intimate entry into his personal “paradise”, pruned birch trees to open up views across the lake to embrace “borrowed” landscapes, and pollarded alders to transform them into “troll” trees.

While the individual dwellings accommodated Astrup’s fast-growing family and proclaimed his, and his wife Engel’s, commitment to the revival of traditional Norwegian arts and crafts, the garden and farmstead provided food for the family, supplied the subjects for his paintings and prints over the last fourteen years of his life, became a refuge for local plants endangered by modern farming practices, and hence implied a statement about national identity. While other artists at the turn of the nineteenth century—including Claude Monet, Joaquín Sorolla, Max Liebermann, Henri Le Sidaner, and Emil Nolde—also created gardens in order to control nature, the subject of their art, Astrup had a uniquely radical agenda which combined the functional with the aesthetic, the ecological with the proclamation of national identity.

Response by

Daniel Robbins, Senior Curator, Leighton House Museum

Leighton House Museum and Holland Park's Other Studio-Houses: Future Developments

Over the course of the twentieth century, two additions were made at the eastern end of Leighton House Museum, the studio-home of the painter Frederic, Lord Leighton (1830–1896). In the late 1920s, a local family named Perrin funded the construction of a two-storey exhibition gallery. Then, as part of post-war restorations, the outdoor space beneath Leighton's first-floor winter studio was in-filled to form toilets, a kitchen, and collection store. Amounting to 43 per cent of the total facility, these two additions mask the original east elevation of the house and are no longer fit for purpose.

Recently, with the support of the Friends of Leighton House, the Heritage Lottery Fund, and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, a scheme has been developed to refurbish entirely the so-called "Perrin Wing" (Fig. 31). This 1920s structure will be re-purposed as the main point of entry into the museum, allowing the cloakroom, shop, reception, and catering functions to be moved out of the historic house, thus reducing pressure on its fabric. Leighton's morning room and winter studio will then be restored and re-presented. The 1950s in-fill will be removed entirely, revealing the original cast-iron columns that supported the winter studio, the now-concealed doorway used by the artist's models, and other hidden architectural features. The resultant space will be enclosed in glass, creating a flexible facility (illustrated here) that looks onto the garden and the surrounding houses. A new basement will be created beneath it, combining visitor facilities with a dedicated collection store and drawings gallery, allowing selections from the museum's holding of more than 700 Leighton drawings to be shown.

Figure 31.
Building Design Partnership, Architect's rendering of the new "Orientation Room", Phase 3 Restoration, Leighton House Museum. Digital image courtesy of The Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea / BDP Architects.

While this project centres on the much-needed enhancements for visitors, including disabled access to all public areas, it will also allow the museum to reposition itself in relation to the remarkable group of purpose-built artists' studio-houses that surround it. Almost all were built in the final quarter of the nineteenth century. With the exception of the home of painter Colin Hunter, lost in the Second World War, and that of G.F. Watts, tragically demolished in the early 1960s to make way for a block of flats, these houses remain. Though privately owned, they reveal much about the personalities, domestic circumstances, and working practices of the artists who commissioned them and, more broadly, the wealth and status enjoyed by successful artists of this period. The lack of display space within Leighton House has always limited opportunities to present this story, preventing visitors from appreciating its rich and fascinating context.

Following the completion of the project in 2021, this will no longer be the case. New displays within the refurbished wing will present examples of work by the "Holland Park Circle" held in the reserve collection, supplemented by new acquisitions and interpretation, including a short film. Archival material currently in the Local Studies section of Kensington Central Library will be relocated to join the Leighton House and 18 Stafford Terrace archives at the museum. A new guide and app will encourage visitors to take a walking tour encompassing the other houses, and regular guided tours of the neighbourhood will be offered.

In the longer term, a series of in-focus exhibitions and publications will become part of the museum's programme, exploring each of the artists and their houses in turn. With planning and funding decisions anticipated in

Summer 2018, Leighton House is on a path to become “the museum of the Holland Park Circle”, a gateway to the discovery of this unique enclave of artists’ studio-houses.

Response by

Nicholas Tromans, Programme Director, Christie's Education, London

Watts Gallery and the Single-Artist Museum

Once the habit had been developed of artists being posthumously canonised by Art History and institutionalised in survey museums, it did not take long for artists themselves to take matters in their own hands and begin establishing public collections of their work. The impetus to this new strain of museum-making was given by the secessionist mood of the later nineteenth century, under which doing-it-yourself was a watchword and getting back to the land, in one way or another, went with the throwing off of the academies. Until recently, I served as curator at one such museum, the Watts Gallery at Compton near Guildford, in what is—still, just—the Surrey countryside, where George Frederic Watts (1817–1904) owned a second home from 1891 (Fig. 32).

Figure 32.
The Watts Gallery, Compton, near Guildford. Digital image courtesy of Watts Gallery.

Watts never fitted into any canon—he made a point of sidling away from any association he felt likely to recruit him—and he succeeded in convincing his numerous admirers that he was a very great and an utterly unique genius. His much younger second wife, the designer Mary Watts, built up, in pharaonic fashion, a tomb-museum complex in the years leading up to her husband’s death in 1904; it was completed just in time for that event. Whether this enchantingly eccentric institution (as it was in the twentieth

century) held back or expanded the reputation of the art of Watts is open to debate, although I believe that is beside the point. The Watts Gallery was a classic example of a new type of museum, which was in itself a dynamic creative endeavour, quite aside from the fluctuations of the artist's "critical fortune".

As the Watts Gallery sought over recent years to piece back together the full complex left by Mary Watts, after its collapse in subsequent decades, we looked about us for peers—other artists' house-museums—from which to learn. There seemed relatively few exemplars in the UK, but many in continental Europe. We set about identifying and contacting them, and these efforts resulted in the Artist's Studio Museum Network, which holds occasional gatherings and is represented by a website with more than 150 European single-artist museums. [50]

These places are remarkably little studied by museologists, but I would suggest they deserve scholarly attention, apart from their undeniable charm for visitors. There is, furthermore, an intriguing super-league within this category that threatens, paradoxically, to outgrow neighbouring museums that offer massively broader collections and programming. Think, for example, of the Van Gogh Museum or the huge new Munch Museum: not house-museums but national institutions successfully projecting an entire culture through the lens of a single painter-celebrity.

The personality museum, in which the whole artist can be encountered—failures as well as triumphs within the *oeuvre*, embarrassing affiliations and relationships alongside avant-garde friends—is not merely a kitsch footnote to the history of art. Rather, it is one way to restore the creative spark to a global museum culture that is arguably losing its diversity and sense of risk.

Footnotes

1 Alice Meynell, "Laura Alma Tadema", *The Art-Journal* (November 1883): 345.

2 J. Comyns Carr, *Coasting Bohemia* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1914), 32.

3 Vern G. Swanson, *The Biography and Catalogue Raisonne of the Paintings of Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema* (London: Garton & Co., 1990), 85.

4 Henry Woods to Luke Fildes, 15 December 1899, in Correspondence of or concerning Luke Fildes, National Art Library MSL/1972/6970-6972.

5 R. de Cordova, "The Panels in Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema's Hall", *The Strand Magazine* 24, no. 144 (December 1902): 622.

6 Percy Cross Standing, *Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema OM, RA* (London: Cassell & Co., 1905), 33–34. The Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam has, for example, a graphite study for the painting *Egyptian Chess Players* (1865, private collection).

7 Stephen Ongpin, *Master Drawings 2017* (London: Stephen Ongpin Fine Art, 2017), nos 25–30.

8 Ellen Gosse, "Laurens Alma-Tadema", *Century Magazine*, February 1894, 493. I am grateful to Stephanie Moser for this reference.

9 The demolition of historic churches and public buildings around this time made it easy for artistic Dutch people to acquire artworks, antiques, and artefacts inexpensively. The Mesdags created a museum of fine art next door to their home, but the furnishings of their home were dispersed at auction in 1903, anticipating the similar dispersal of the Alma-Tadema collection a decade later.

10 Rudolph de Cordova, “The Panels in Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema’s Hall”, *Strand Magazine* 24 (December 1902): 615–630. An updated version of this article was published as “The Hall of Panels in the House of Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, R.A.”, *Scribner’s Magazine* 49, no. 3 (March 1911): 299–314.

11 De Cordova, “The Hall of Panels in the House of Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, R.A.”, 299.

12 Cosmo Monkhouse, “Some English Artists and Their Studios”, *Century Magazine* 24, no. 4 (August 1882): 566.

13 De Cordova, “The Hall of Panels in the House of Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, R.A.”, 308. A colour illustration of *A Scene in Drenthe* appears in Elizabeth Prettejohn and Peter Trippi (eds.), *Lawrence Alma-Tadema: At Home in Antiquity* (Munich: Prestel, 2016), 93, Fig. 112.

14 Compare the engraving in Monkhouse, “Some English Artists and Their Studios”, 564, with the photograph at the Archives of American Art of the *Interior of Grove End Road, House of Lawrence Alma-Tadema*, ca. 1902. See https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/items/detail/interior-grove-end-road-house-lawrence-almatedema-3182. I would like to thank Charlotte Gere for drawing my attention to this photograph.

15 De Cordova, “The Panels in Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema’s Hall”, 615.

16 Reminiscence from Jacques-Émile Blanche cited in James Laver, *‘Vulgar Society’: The Romantic Career of James Tissot, 1836–1902* (London: Constable & Co., 1936), 39–40.

17 Maurice B. Adams, *Artists’ Homes: A Portfolio of Drawings Including the Houses and Studios of Several Eminent Painters, Sculptors and Architects* (London: BT Batsford, 1883), 5.

18 Mary Roberts, “Networked Objects,” *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 45 (2013): 570.

19 Rossetti to William Allingham, ca. 20 January 1861, in William E. Fredeman (ed.), *The Correspondence of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, 10 vols (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 2002–2015), Vol. II, no. 61(5), 342–343.

20 Meredith to Captain Frederick Augustus Maxse, in W.M. Meredith (ed.), *Letters of George Meredith,* 2 vols (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1912), Vol. 1, 73.

21 Rosalie Mander (ed.), Henry Treffry Dunn, *Recollections of Dante Gabriel Rossetti and His Circle* (Westerham: Dalrymple Press, 1984), 24. Dunn’s *Recollections* were first published in an edition (London: Elkin Mathews, 1904) in which both William Michael Rossetti and the editor, Gale Pedrick, introduced numerous changes to the writer’s manuscript version. Lady Mander’s edition cited here restores Dunn’s original text from his notebooks.

22 Henry Currie Marillier, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: An Illustrated Memorial of His Life and Art* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1899), 121–122.

23 This image also appeared on the cover of Barbara Bryant, *G.F. Watts in Kensington: Little Holland House and Gallery*, Studies in the Art of George Frederic Watts 3 (Compton: Watts Gallery, 2009).

24 Barbara Bryant, “An Artist Collects: Frederic Leighton as a Collector of Paintings and Drawings”, in Daniel Robbins (ed.), *Closer to Home* (London: Leighton House Museum, 2010), 22–29.

25 Jason Edwards, “The Lessons of Leighton House: Aesthetics, Politics, Erotics”, in Jason Edwards and Imogen Hart (eds.), *Rethinking the Interior: Aestheticism and Arts and Crafts, 1867–1896* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), 97.

26 Barbara Bryant, “The Private and Public Life of Frank Holl: The Journey from Camden Town to Hampstead and Surrey”, in Mark Bills, *Frank Holl: Emerging from the Shadows* (Compton: Watts Gallery, 2013), 55–73.

27 Barbara Bryant, “An English Kubla Khan: Mortimer Menpes and His Japanese House of Flowers in London”, in Margot Brandlhuber and Michael Buhrs (eds.), *In the Temple of the Self: The Artist’s Residence as a Total Work of Art* (Munich: Villa Stuck and Hatje Cantz, 2013), 152–165; Barbara Bryant, “Kubla Khan in Chelsea: ‘Japanese Menpes’ at 25 Cadogan Gardens”, in Julie Robinson (ed.), *The World of Mortimer Menpes: Painter, Etcher, Raconteur* (Adelaide: Art Gallery of South Australia, 2014), 152–161.

28 Harry How, “Mr Briton Riviere RA”, *The Strand Magazine* (January 1896): 4.

29 C. Lewis Hind, “Painters’ Studios”, *The Art-Journal* (May 1890): 138.

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49 For more information about Astruptunet, please visit http://artiststudiomuseum.org/studio-museums/astruptunet/.

50 See the Artist's Studio Museum Network, http://artiststudiomuseum.org/.

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